
Pony Baseball Rules (2-27-25)

AGE REQUIREMENTS

- Players must be **14 years old or younger** as of **September 1** of the current year.
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GAME RULES

Bat Inspection

- Bats must be inspected by the umpire **before** the game begins.

Pace of Play

- After the **1st inning**, pitchers are allowed **5 warm-up pitches** (4 pitches and 5th pitch going down).
- Umpires will **enforce the pace of play** for mound visits, stepping into the batter's box, and other delays.
- After the **1st inning**, **no warm-up balls** are allowed for infield or outfield.
- A **new pitcher** is allowed **10 warm-up pitches** upon entering the game.
- After **2 outs**, a **courtesy runner** (last batted out) may be used for the catcher.
- If a coach warms up a pitcher, those pitches **count toward the pitcher's limit**, and the catcher must complete the remaining warm-up throws.

Game Length & Inning Continuation

- **Game Length: 7 innings or 2.5 hours** (finish the current inning if time expires).
- If time expires **between innings**, the next inning **must still be played**.
- The top of a **new inning officially begins** immediately after the **third out** is recorded in the previous inning.
- **Game time starts immediately after the coaches' meeting.**

Tie Breaker Rule

- If a game is tied after **7 innings** or when the time limit + finished inning is reached:
 - The **inning begins with no outs** and the **last batted out on 2nd base**.
 - If still tied after **2 extra innings**, the game is considered a **tie**.

Minimum Players & Substitutions

- A game can start with **8 players**. The **9th batting position** will result in an **automatic out** unless both coaches agree otherwise.
- **Starters** removed for a substitute **may re-enter one time** (must return to the same batting position).
- **15-run rule after 4 innings, 10-run rule after 5 innings.**
- **Umpires may call the game due to darkness** for player safety.

Team Conduct

- Team enthusiasm is **encouraged**, but **negative chanting** toward opponents is **not allowed** (e.g., “Hey batter-batter swing”).
 - **Violations: First offense = warning, Second offense = forfeit** and review by the League Director.
 - **All other rules follow official Pony Baseball rules.**
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BASERUNNING RULES

- **Play at the Plate:** The runner **must slide** or risk being called out (**umpire’s discretion**).
 - **Courtesy Runner:** Recommended (but not required) for the **catcher with 2 outs**.
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HITTING RULES

Batting Order Options

1. **Continuous Batting Order** (optional but must be used the entire game).
 - All players present **must bat** in a fixed order.
2. **Traditional Batting Order** (9-player lineup with substitutions).
 - If using less than a full roster, follow **Pony substitution rules**.

Lineup Cards

- Must be provided to the **opposing coach and umpire** before the game.

Illegal Bats

- **Penalty: Coach & player ejected**, and the player will be called **out** unless a substitute replaces them.

- **Exception:** This **does not apply** if using a **continuous batting order**.
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SUBSTITUTION RULES (Traditional Batting Order)

Rule	Details
Starters May Re-enter Once	A starting player can re-enter one time , returning to the same spot in the batting order.
Substitutes Cannot Re-enter	Once removed, a substitute cannot re-enter the game.
Pitcher Rule	A pitcher cannot return to the mound once removed but may re-enter in another position.
Batting Order Must Be Maintained	A substitute must bat in the same lineup spot as the player they replaced.
Injury Exception	If no legal substitute is available, the team may finish with 8 players (taking an automatic out for the missing spot).
Courtesy Runner	The last batted out may be used for the catcher with two outs to speed up play.

PITCHING RULES

- **Pitching Distance:** 54 feet
- **Maximum Pitches per Day:** 95

Mandatory Rest Periods

Pitches Thrown	Required Rest Days
1-20	0 days
21-35	1 day
36-50	2 days
51-65	3 days
66+	4 days

All pitches pitched count (Scheduled Tri County games, exhibition, or travel games count towards pitch count)

Additional Pitching Rules

- A pitcher reaching their **max pitch count** may **finish the current batter** before being removed.
- **Once removed, a pitcher may not return to the mound.**
- **Drop 3rd Strike Rule is in effect.**
- **Intentional Walk:** The pitcher may throw **4 balls**, or the coach may signal **four fingers** to the umpire.
- If a pitcher hits **5 batters**, they must be **removed** from the mound for the remainder of the game.

Pitcher Equipment Restrictions

- **No wristbands, batting gloves, or arm sleeves** while pitching.
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FIELDING & DEFENSE

- **Infield Fly Rule** is in effect (**umpire's discretion**).
 - **Defenders cannot fake a tag** to deceive a baserunner.
 - **Pick-off plays are allowed.**
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EQUIPMENT & BAT RULES

Safety Equipment

- **First Base must have a safety base.**
 - If not in place before the first pitch, the **home team forfeits** the game.
- **Catcher's Masks:** Must be **Hockey Style** or have a **throat protector**.

Bat Rules

Legal Bats

- **Any BBCOR-labeled bat** (per NFHS rules).

- Bats 30 inches & under with greater than minus 3 drop must have a USA Baseball logo.
- Wood bats meeting NFHS standards.

Illegal Bats

- All 2 1/4" barrel bats.
- Any bat with a USSSA logo.

Examples of Legal and Illegal Bats That Do Not Contain a USA Baseball Logo			
Length	Weight	Barrel Diameter	Status
31	28	2-5/8"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
30	22	2-3/4"	Illegal—Maximum barrel diameter is 2-5/8". Additionally this bat will not contain the BBCOR label
30	20	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
29	18	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
31	20	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
28	19	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
31	28	2-3/4"	Illegal—Maximum barrel diameter is 2-5/8". Additionally this bat will not contain the BBCOR label.
29	26	2-5/8"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
30	27	2-5/8"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
32	22	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
31	25	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
30	27	2-1/2"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
30	18	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal

Examples of Legal and Illegal Non-Wood Bats That Are Marked With a USA Baseball Logo			
Length	Weight	Barrel Diameter	Status
30	20	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
31	20	2-5/8"	Illegal—All bats 31" and over for use in IESA contests must meet NFHS guidelines including BBCOR label. It does not matter if this bat has a USA Baseball logo. A 31" bat has to be BBCOR labeled.
28	18	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
29	18	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
31	21	2-5/8"	Illegal—All bats 31" and over for use in IESA contests must meet NFHS guidelines including BBCOR label. It does not matter if this bat has a USA Baseball logo. A 31" bat has to be BBCOR labeled.
27	15	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
29	19	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
30	18	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
30	20	2-1/2"	Illegal—Any bat with a USA Baseball logo must have a 2-5/8" barrel diameter.
30	22	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
30	25	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat

UMPIRES

- 2 umpires are required per game.
- Minimum age: 16 years old.

SCHEDULING & MAKE-UP GAMES

- **A game is official** if **4 innings** are completed (or 3 1/2 innings if the home team is leading).
- **Suspended games** resume from the point of stoppage.
- Players **absent from the original game** cannot play unless replacing a previously listed player.
- **Home team is responsible** for rescheduling make-up games.
- If unresolved, contact **Brad Male at 815-274-8335**.

ROSTER RULES

- **Younger players may be called up** only if a team has **9 or fewer players**.
- A younger player can play for **one week (2 games)** before committing to the older level.
- If a younger player plays **3 games** at the older level, they must stay at that level.
- **A younger player cannot pitch** unless permanently moved up.

REMEMBER: DO NOT INJURE A PITCHER JUST TO WIN!!!